



Chairs Hartley and Simmons, Ranking Members Martin and Buckbee and Distinguished Members of the Commerce Committee.

Testimony provided by Rob Brule, First Selectman, Town of Waterford

February 16, 2021

I am in support of Senate Bill 167, An Act Concerning the Disposition of the Former Seaside Sanatorium Facility.

Waterford has been Seaside's home for approximately 90 years. In that time, the Town has experienced the highs and lows of the property, from its construction, hosting its patients and staff, to its closure, and navigating the myriad of ideas and opinions surrounding its future. Waterford is invested in seeing balanced and responsible reuse of the site.

Key priorities for Town of Waterford are:

- **Facilitating the return of some portion of the land to contribute to Waterford's tax base.** Uses beyond a public park will affect the provision of services and maintenance of roads, and should contribute to associated costs.
- **Preserving meaningful public access to our coastal resources.** Waterford is, at its heart, a community that celebrates the connection to its coastlines, rivers, lakes, and streams. Connecting people to those resources is important. Any future use Seaside should address a universally accessible design to preserve and protect public access.
- **Promoting responsible, resilient development.** Future use of the property should be at a scale that does not overwhelm its host community and neighborhood. A specific zone district was adopted in 2011 in Waterford to address appropriate uses and scale of development. Future designs should prioritize resiliency and take into account the effects of climate change and sea level rise.
- **Celebrating the history of the property.** The Town is sensitive to the cost of rehabilitating historic structures. A plan to preserve or replicate building façades should be considered in plans moving forward. At a minimum, interpretive signage about Seaside's history should be included in public spaces.

Ultimately, the Town of Waterford supports the return of a portion of the property to private, residential use, thereby facilitating responsible development and preserving of a portion of the property for public access to our coastline. The Town is enthusiastic about working with the State of Connecticut and any future developer on projects that celebrate the site's history and the community that hosts it.